



Commission Meeting/Board Planning Session
Thursday, May 28, 2020
8:30 am-10:30 am via Zoom
Minutes

Present:

Kate Pew Wolters, Lew Chamberlain, Bob Herr, Amanda Barbour, Kristina Donaldson, Lynne Ferrell, Maureen Hale, Sue Jandernoa, Melinda Johnson, Karen O'Donovan, Juan Olivarez, Julie Ridenour, Milt Rohwer, Michelle Van Dyke, Carl Ver Beek, and Amy Turner-Thole.

Staff: Annemarie Valdez, Heather Boswell, Cati Cortes, Megan Streng, Christine Timbol-Laron, Tyler Aman, Anissa Eddie, Shelby French, Kristen Sobolewski, and Jill B. Salisbury who recorded the minutes.

Absent:

Ron Caniff and Sean Welsh.

Welcome:

Co-Chair Kate Pew Wolters called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. She reminded everyone of the proper Zoom meeting protocol and emphasized that she didn't want technology to prohibit anyone from commenting or asking questions. She recommended using the chat box.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

First Steps Kent Updates:

President and CEO Annemarie Valdez gave updates on the following:

- **Pritzker:**
We are in the second year of our Pritzker Fellowship grant. Earlier this year, we were invited by Pritzker to apply for a \$350K community innovation grant for systems level child care work. Due to COVID-19, the timeline of this grant has slowed a bit, but we have since learned that FSK is a finalist. Anissa Eddie, Pritzker Fellow, reported that at the state level, Pritzker awarded Michigan over \$1 million in funding for implementation of an early childhood policy agenda. Since Kent County has been a leader in forming state policy agenda and aligning our county's activities with the state, FSK is hoping to be chosen for the \$350K community innovation grant.
- **Shared Services:**
In 2019, local foundations and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation approached FSK about building a shared services pilot for Kent County. FSK applied to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and was awarded a three-year grant. COVID-19 has accelerated the shared services work and FSK, along with members of the Kent County Child Care Crisis Team, are meeting the needs of child care providers who are serving the children of essential workers during this pandemic.

The Team began meeting in March when the pandemic began and continues to meet weekly to help providers with the basic resources they need to remain open. Through a weekly survey, we learn that providers are struggling financially due to COVID-19 and that they can't find the supplies and food they need for their business. Through Heart of West Michigan United Way's Coronavirus Response Fund, the Team secured funding to help providers with basic food and supply needs. Head Start of Kent County has been able to secure food and supply ordering through their vendors. Their warehouse has been used as the weekly distribution site. Six distributions have already taken place with sixty to eighty cars in the pick-up lane each week. While COVID-19 has been a challenge, it has allowed FSK to use its shared services model to build relationships with providers and to align various organizations to help keep child care providers open during this pandemic.

- **Ready by 5 Millage – Contracts/Data:**

In March, 17 programs funded by the Ready by Five Millage were scheduled to kick off. Then COVID-19 came and FSK and its providers were forced to be flexible and adjust. Since adjusting, the work continues. Contracts with Service Providers have been finalized and agreements are in process of being executed by the Kent County Health Department that will allow for data sharing. Wolters affirmed Ready by Five Staff for their hard work.

- **Aspen Institute Family Prosperity Grant:**

Recently, FSK was invited to apply and has since become a finalist for a two-year grant. Kent County's WMCAT and The Source are also finalists and Aspen has encouraged the three of us to work together to help foster family prosperity. FSK will use this \$100K grant for systems work, specifically around quality child care and the shared services work that already is occurring.

Finance Report:

Treasurer Bob Herr reviewed and presented FSK's April Financials and the Ready by Five April Financials.

Wrap Up:

Wolters concluded the business portion of the meeting at 8:56 am and welcomed Facilitator Eureka People, Eureka Group, and Nicole Notario-Risk, Groundwork Community Consulting, who were helping to present the next part of the meeting, the strategic planning portion.

Strategic Planning:

Wolters asked for a motion to approve the presented goals and objectives of the strategic plan. Milt Rohwer moved. Carl Ver Beek second. Unanimous.

Adjournment:

Wolters adjourned the strategic planning portion of the meeting at 10:30 am.

Next FSK Commission Meeting:

Thursday, July 30, 2020 – 8:30-10:30 am
Location TBD.